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SCIENCE

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THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE MAGNALIA NATURÆ; OR, THE GREATER PROBLEMS OF BIOLOGY¹

THE science of zoology, all the more the incorporate science of biology, is no simple affair, and from its earliest beginnings it has been a great and complex and many-sided thing. We can scarce get a broader view of it than from Aristotle, for no man has ever looked upon our science with a more far-seeing and comprehending eye. Aristotle was all things that we mean by "naturalist" or "biologist." He was a student of the ways and doings of beast and bird and creeping thing; he was morphologist and embryologist; he had the keenest insight into physiological problems, though lacking that knowledge of the physical sciences without which physiology can go but a little way: he was the first and is the greatest of psychologists; and in the light of his genius biology merged in a great philosophy.

I do not for a moment suppose that the vast multitude of facts which Aristotle records were all, or even mostly, the fruit of his own immediate and independent observation. Before him were the Hippocratic and other schools of physicians and anatomists. Before him there were nameless and forgotten Fabres, Rœsels, Réaumur and Hubers, who observed the habits, the diet and the habitations of the sand-wasp or the mason-bee; who traced out the little lives, and discerned the vocal organs, of grasshopper and cicada; and who, together with generations of bee-keeping

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¹ Address of the president to the Zoological Section. Portsmouth, 1911.